

# British Hold in North; French Fall Back Six Miles, Surrender Roye and Noyon

## Explosions Wreck Jersey War Plant; Lower City Shaken

Fire Sweeps Jarvis Warehouses, Erie Shop and Yards, Imperilling 1,500

No Lives Are Lost; \$2,000,000 Damage

Cause of Disaster Unsolved, but Federal Agents Talk of German Plots

Fire and a series of explosions yesterday destroyed the plant of the Jarvis Warehouses, Inc., a Jersey City depository for army supplies. The lives of more than 1,500 workers were endangered and damage of \$2,000,000 caused. German agents are blamed by officials of the Naval and Military Intelligence bureaus.

In addition to demolishing the Jarvis warehouses and yards, which cover two city blocks at Twelfth, Thirteenth and Provost streets, Jersey City, the fire destroyed the Erie Railroad repair shops, adjoining the storage plant, spread to the yards of the Erie and Lackawanna Railroad and destroyed twenty-four freight cars laden with supplies for the Allies and fifteen locomotives.

After burning for nine hours the flames at a late hour last night continued to illumine the Jersey shore, and firemen and apparatus drawn from every available fire house were still working to prevent them from spreading.

No Known Loss of Life  
Sixty employees of the Jarvis plant and 1,000 workers in the Erie repair shops, including eight women machinists, were said to have been accounted for, and no lives, so far as is known, were lost.

Hundreds of railroad workers and freight handlers were at work near the storage plant when the first explosion occurred, and whether they were able to gain places of safety will not be known until to-day.

What precipitated the disaster is a mystery, but employees of the Jarvis plant agree that the fire started before the first explosion wrecked the main building of the plant. Thus those engaged in the building were able to seek safety.

Explosions Alarm New York  
Exactly at 3 o'clock the first explosive blast shook the Jersey shore with terrific violence and startled Manhattan. A dense cloud of thick, oily smoke rose from the Erie yards, and, borne by a brisk west wind, rolled across the river to Manhattan, settling over and darkening the territory between Chambers and Wall streets and spreading Brooklynwards across the East River.

The explosions were the most violent felt in New York since the Black Tom disaster. The noise alarmed workers in the lower section of the city, many of whom—those of high tension over the war—believed Manhattan had been attacked by German airplanes or submarines. Many windows were shattered by the second detonation.

In Jersey City the force of the explosions reduced three frame buildings 250 feet from the Jarvis warehouse to splinters; rocked Hoboken and left but little glass in the neighborhood.

Blasts Hurl Debris into Air  
The first detonation was followed at intervals of a few minutes by four other equally violent explosions, and city objects thrown up by the blasts were raised upon river craft and, carried by the wind, fell upon the startled crowds in Park Row and lower Broadway.

Residents of the congested sections of Jersey City, foreigners for the most part, were terror-stricken, and dismay prevailed along the Manhattan waterfront until the source of the explosions was learned. Pedestrians, with reports of German long-distance guns and promised air raids in mind, gazed apprehensively upward until the blasts were traced by the smoke clouds to New Jersey.

Fire Started in New York  
Sparks, borne across the river, fired the Erie Railroad ferry-house at the foot of Chambers Street, and did \$7,500 damage before it could be extinguished. The Southern Pacific lighter barge, loaded with general merchandise for Boston, also was ignited by a piece of glowing wood which fell into its hold. Tugs and lighters, under bombardment, scurried to safety.

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## German Losses Estimated at 250,000 Men

Despite Heavy Captures, Germans Are Far From a Decision

Kaiser Is Drawing Heavily on Reserves

Battle Likely to Continue for Weeks, With Allies Hitting Back

By Arthur S. Draper

LONDON, March 26.—The battle-front extended northward to Arras is the centre of another gigantic enemy attack. The situation must be regarded with the keenest anxiety and the enemy is throwing in everything. Latest reports were that the British were holding firmly.

The new thrust at Arras is possible is heavier than the drive on the Somme, where Anglo-French troops hold the old lines from which was launched the offensive of 1916. On the Somme battlefield the Germans have shown signs of exhaustion, though sheer momentum is carrying them forward.

Amiens, a centre of great strategic importance, is well covered by Haig's gallant troops. Tremendous pressure is being brought to bear on the northern end of the Albert-Roye line. Seventy-odd divisions, roughly 800,000 bayonets, have been hurled into the world's greatest battle by the enemy and his reserves are still moving up.

Far Short of Decision  
He has made heavy captures in men, guns and material, but what he has accomplished falls far short of a decision.

The Germans have dropped behind the schedule of the Kaiser, who from St. Quentin is watching the struggle upon which is staked his dynasty, and must be sharing the anxiety of his military leaders, who already have suffered probably 250,000 casualties.

The very fact that the Kaiser is making the final gamble of the war means that the battle will continue some weeks, and that both sides will throw in an ever increasing number of troops until a decision is reached.

Coolly and calmly Pétain and Haig are waiting the psychological moment to spring their counter measures. Pétain must block the way to Paris; Haig must guard the Channel ports. Both have large reserves. Along the Albert-Roye line the Allies are reorganizing their forces while to the north, southeast of Arras, they are handling the new problem of defending this sector, which fortunately is one of the strongest on the British front. The Canadians have come into action.

Casualties Are Heavy  
On the Somme and at Albert and Roye there are centres of terrific battle. The British have suffered heavy casualties and the loss of prisoners, guns and material, but their rearguard fighting is fully up to the standard of Mons.

Just now, covering Amiens is all important, and if a successful stand is made all losses, territory included, are negligible, and a small price for the toll exacted from the enemy in life, military prestige and eventually civilian and military morale.

Nothing short of a decision will satisfy the enemy, and he is going to get it. His optimism shows Berlin's optimism is not wholly shared in the Dual Monarchy, which has supplied a huge number of guns, but awaits news of counter attacks and strategic successes before shouting victory.

Albert But a Shell  
Of the real Albert now nothing but the shell of a town is left. It is interesting because of the figure of the Virgin leaning from the church tower. The guns here command the whole battlefield for almost ten miles' radius.

Here the French settled in the fall of 1914 and held their lines until relieved by the British. For nearly two years the positions were unchanged. Then came the Battle of the Somme. Now the British are back again.

At no time in the war have the British aviators shown greater superiority in the air, and they deserve high praise for the way they have covered the withdrawal.

The closing of the German frontiers is considered to portend another offensive move, possibly by the enemy. A change in the weather might prove a valuable aid to the Allies, as the enemy is now operating in a country which quickly becomes marshy after rain. So far the weather has been dry and hot, and a great advantage to the Germans.

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## Americans in Thick of Fight Around Roye

Battle Shoulder to Shoulder With the French and British Forces

London Announces Pershing Is Aiding

Two Regiments of Engineers Known To Be Near Point of Attack

LONDON, March 26.—American troops are fighting shoulder to shoulder with British and French forces in the vicinity of Roye, it was officially announced here to-night.

Roye now seems to be the centre of the most intense fighting of the whole battlefield. It is here the enemy has made his greatest gain in ground and here he is exerting himself in the most desperate effort to break through.

At Roye the Germans have progressed about twenty-five miles southwest from the vicinity of St. Quentin since the drive started, last Thursday morning. The town was lost at 10:30 o'clock this morning, Haig reported, and a battle of the fiercest character is proceeding just to the west and north.

This is the first confirmation from the Allied side of the Berlin report on two days that American troops had taken their places in the line of the offensive, although it was known that two regiments and three companies of American engineers were along the front Hindenburg chose to strike.

## U. S. Infantrymen May Be Engaged, Washington Belief

WASHINGTON, March 26.—For the people of the United States, the announcement by the British authorities that American troops are fighting side by side with French and British defenders brings the battle closer home. War Department officials had no word from General Pershing on the subject, but were expecting at any moment reports showing the extent of American participation.

Until General Pershing reports as to the American forces engaged no one here will hazard a guess concerning the part they are playing. American heavy artillery has been training in England, and the men are familiar with British great guns. They may be reaching the front with new guns sent to replace those lost during the retirement. American tank detachments also have been at the British training camps for months. American engineers are officially reported, as on the battle scene.

It was regarded as entirely possible, however, that American infantry divisions, already seasoned by front-line experience in their own sector, had come up with French reinforcements. They would be certain to operate with the French, as their equipment is largely British, and they must be supplied with ammunition and replacements from the French communication lines.

## German Tanks and Those Captured From British Used in Drive

BERLIN, Monday, March 25.—German tanks, reinforced by captured British tanks, says a semi-official statement to-day on Sunday's fighting in the West, "took a leading part in breaking the brave enemy resistance."

Tanks attached to the German divisions fighting below St. Quentin stood the test brilliantly, the statement says, and their mobility was universally praised. All the tanks which took part in the fighting are said to have returned undamaged. It was mainly due to their intervention, the statement continues, that the tenacious resistance of the British, especially the machine-gun nests, was broken quickly. Troops manning a concrete redoubt near Arras were reported to have been overpowered immediately by the tanks.

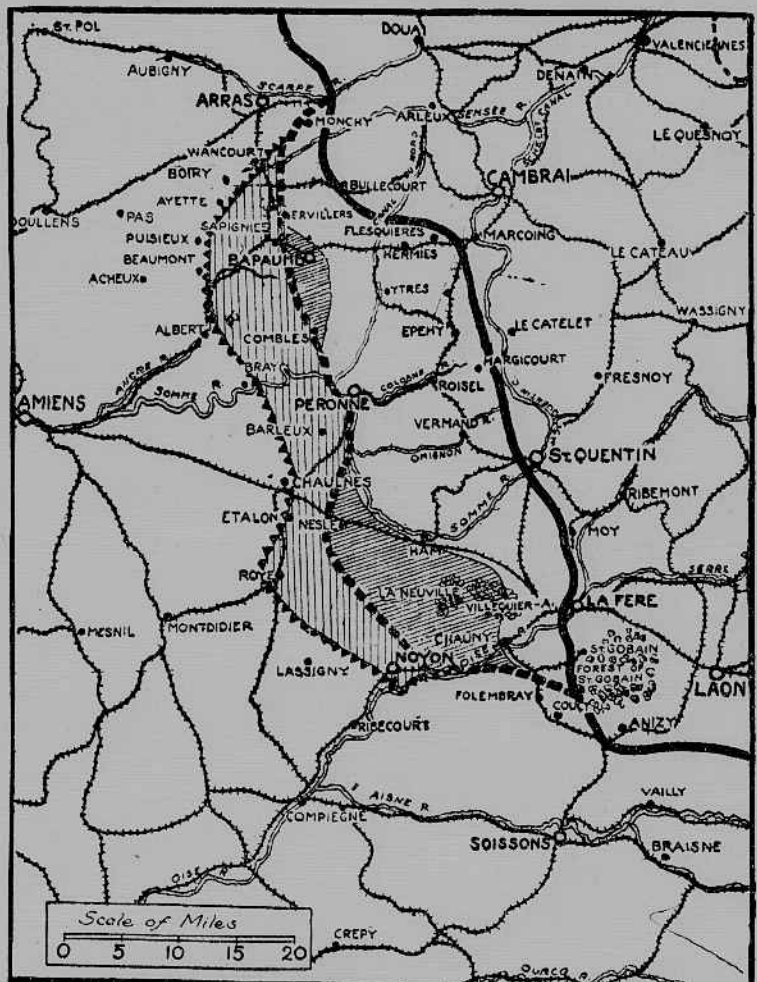
COPENHAGEN, March 26.—German correspondents report that six British tanks have been captured.

## Germany Closes Her Neutral Frontiers

LONDON, March 26.—The German-Dutch, German-Swiss and German-Danish frontiers will be closed to international traffic on Wednesday or Thursday, according to a Central News dispatch from Amsterdam.

The closing of the German frontiers has almost always preceded a spectacular German offensive.

## The German Advance of Monday and Tuesday



The area shaded in perpendicular lines shows enemy gains of twenty-four hours as indicated in last night's dispatches. The gains of the previous day are shown in diagonal shading. Territory between this and the heavy line was lost the first four days of the offensive.

## The Official Statements

LONDON, March 26.—The official statements given out to-day by the British War Office follow:

(NIGHT)—North of the Somme local fighting has taken place at different points. Much movement of hostile troops and transport has been observed in the battle area, and these have been engaged by our artillery and airplanes.

South of the Somme, the hostile attacks reported this morning have been pressed vigorously, with fresh German divisions against Noyon and Roye.

This afternoon new hostile attacks commenced in the neighborhood of Chaules, and between Chaules and the Somme, to the north of it. The battle is continuing on the whole front south of the Somme.

In the past six days of constant fighting our troops on all parts of the battlefield have shown the utmost courage. In addition to those British divisions which have already been mentioned, exceptional gallantry was shown also by the following: The 8th, 18th, 31st, 41st, 61st, 63d and 66th divisions.

(EVENING)—The enemy made no further attacks during the night of March 25-26 on our front north of the Somme. During the afternoon there have been local engagements on this part of the battlefield in which the enemy has been repulsed, but he has attempted no serious attack.

The line north of the Somme now runs: Bray, Albert, Beaumont-Hamel, Puisieux, Alette, Boiry, Henin, Wancourt, just west of Monchy to the Scarpe, and thence along our original front.

The Germans have been attacking heavily south of the Somme this morning and took Roye at 10:30 a. m.

The line there appears to run from Mericourt, on the Somme, through Rosieres, west of Roye and west of Noyon. Fresh German divisions have been identified in this area, including two Guard and two Brandenburg divisions.

On this part of the battlefield the British, French and American troops are fighting shoulder to shoulder and French reinforcements are rapidly coming up. The enemy has been checked west of Roye and Noyon.

(DAY)—The fighting died down during the night. Our troops established themselves on new positions east of Roye and Albert.

North of the Somme continuation of the fighting is expected, but it has not yet developed. Attacks are reported to be developing this morning south of the Somme against our troops and those of the French in the neighborhood of Roye and Chaules.

The enemy's losses continue to be severe. He has been obliged to reinforce his battlefield from all parts of the Western theatre. Over seventy hostile divisions are known to have been engaged in the battle.

## Our Troops Are Holding Solidly, Says Paris

PARIS, March 26.—The official statements issued by the French War Office to-day follow:

(NIGHT)—Our troops are holding solidly to their positions on the left bank of the Oise above Noyon. The fighting continues with undiminished violence along the front comprising Bray-sur-Somme, Chaules, Roye and Noyon.

(DAY)—The battle continues with violence. During last evening and in the night the enemy multiplied his attacks on the whole front between Noyon and Chaules. The French artillery, well established in the region of Noyon and supported effectively by our infantry, is retarding the German thrust. Frequent counter attacks have been made and heavy losses inflicted on the enemy.

Noyon was evacuated during the night in perfect order. The French are holding the left bank of the Oise firmly.

## Enemy Retreating on Wide Front, Berlin Claims

BERLIN, March 26.—The official statements given out to-day by the German War Office follow:

(NIGHT)—A new phase has set in in the tremendous battle on both sides of the Somme. The enemy is retreating on a wide front. During the pursuit we have already crossed at many points our old positions before the Somme Battle in 1916, in a westerly direction.

We are before Albert. Lihons, Roye and Noyon have been taken. (DAY)—In continuation of the great battle in France, our troops yesterday achieved fresh successes. English divisions, brought up from Flanders and Italy, and French divisions threw themselves against our troops in desperate attacks. They were defeated.

## Germans Throw The Allies Across Old Somme Line

Enemy, Hurling Fresh Masses Into Battle on Thirty-Mile Front, Forces New Retreat, Making a Total Gain of Twenty-five Miles in Six Days

Berlin Announces Guns Captured Now Number 963, and 100 Tanks—Between the Somme and Arras General Haig's Troops Counter Attack and Check Drive—Chaules Falls

British, French and American troops are fighting a terrific battle on a front of about thirty miles between the Somme and the Oise rivers, the southern half of the German offensive front. On the northern half of the battlefield in Picardy, between the Somme and Arras, the British are holding firmly in a line through Bray, Albert, Beaumont-Hamel and Wancourt. Only local fighting took place there yesterday, though there are indications that the Germans mean to renew the battle. Chaules, Roye, Noyon and many villages between the Somme and the Oise have been evacuated, and the Germans have occupied them. But the French are holding the line of the Oise and preventing the enemy breaking through to the south.

The front has shifted from five to seven miles westward in the last twenty-four hours. The gain is least in the north and greatest in the south, where the Allies have fallen back about twenty-five miles in six days.

Berlin announced to-day that guns captured totalled 963, besides 100 tanks. No claims of additional prisoners have been received. German tanks are being freely used.

Observers at the front state that the enemy losses Monday were the heaviest of any day so far. Two hundred and fifty thousand is one estimate of the German total losses.

American troops are fighting in the vicinity of Roye, London announces. The Germans took this town at 10 a. m. yesterday, and a fearful conflict is proceeding just to the west of it.

The enemy has reconquered most of the ground given up in the retreat to the Hindenburg line last spring. At certain places he has crossed the line held before the beginning of the Somme battle of 1916. The line of the Ancre has been passed.

French troops have been thrown into the fighting as far north as Bray, on the Somme, which is a little north of the centre of the battle line.

The Associated Press correspondent at British headquarters guardedly predicts that a change of fortune of battle is not far off. On the other hand, Berlin announced last night that a new phase of the battle had set in and the Allies were retreating on a wide front.

So far the Allies have fallen back with their line intact. The enemy everywhere has failed to break through or to cut off large bodies of troops.

## French and British Meet Fresh Onslaught Gallantly

[By The Associated Press]  
WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE, March 26.—The Germans to-day followed up their progress of yesterday at Nesle on the southern battlefield by launching a terrific assault against the British along a line running, roughly, between Hattencourt and the region of Roye. The British, cooperating with their French allies, were meeting the onslaught doggedly and gallantly, and a sanguinary struggle was in progress this afternoon.

Further north the enemy also developed a fresh offensive movement, to the south of Suzanne, which lies a little northeast of Bray-sur-Somme. But the Germans were pushing with less strength here than in the southern theatre, possibly for strategic reasons.

These two sectors were the scene of most important operations to-day, although fighting was in progress along the whole of the great battlefield. On the northern sector, about Achiet-le-Grand, Logeast Wood and northward, where such desperate fighting was waged yesterday, the Germans had not renewed their attacks in strength at a late hour this forenoon.

Allies Are Rallying  
The Allies to-day were probably in better condition to contest the German advance than they had been since the beginning of the offensive. The capture of Nesle yesterday by the enemy was achieved after heavy fighting over a considerable front. The Germans advanced in strength both north and south of the

town, and by pressing the defending lines back in these places formed a salient from which the Allies were forced to withdraw, leaving Nesle in the hands of the enemy. Heavy fighting to-day in this section was forecast by the appearance of new masses of troops which the Germans brought up, ready for another push.

The fighting on Sunday and Monday in the neighborhood of Ervillers was most bitter. Throughout Sunday night and the early hours Monday the Germans kept pressing against the stubbornly contending British, who fought with such desperation against overwhelming odds that they repelled the onrushing infantry. After a breathing spell in the early morning the Germans again made a heavy assault between Ervillers and Gomicourt and were caught in the British artillery barrage and crushed.

British Counter Attack  
A little later the enemy advanced once more and stormed the position with such ferocity that it was feared Ervillers must go. Fresh British troops were sent up and carried out an immediate counter attack, relieving the situation.

The enemy, finding the road barred through this place, began hammering below Gomicourt, in the region of Sapignies. The British line south of this place had already swung back to the west, and finally it became apparent that it would be policy to withdraw from Ervillers, Gomicourt and Sapignies and straighten out the front. This was